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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release to AM's MONDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1945.

Strict governmental control of the distribution of the newly-discovered rodenticide, known simply as "1080"--one of the most poisonous of known substances--was recommended today by Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson, director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, in a report to Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes.

"1080" gets its name because it is the one-thousand and eightieth chemical tested in the government's two-year search for an effective rat killer to replace red squill and strychnine, supplies of which had been cut off or reduced by the war.

Some idea of the destructive possibilities of "1080" may be gained from one example of experimental work with the poison on California ground squirrels, cited by Dr. Gabrielson. Using one pound of "1080" to 4,000 pounds of grain, he said, a bait was developed, one gram of which would consistently kill an adult ground squirrel. Thus used, one pound of "1080" could kill more than 1,800,000 ground squirrels.

While the poison, the chemical name of which is sodium fluoracetate, is by far the most effective rat killer known, Dr. Gabrielson declared, it is also deadly to other animals as well. A small pinch of "1080" would be fatal to a human.

Because of the dangers involved in its use, "1080" has been used so far by the Fish and Wildlife Service only on an experimental basis. Persons handling it wear gloves and are masked for extra protection.

"1080" is manufactured by only one producer and on a restricted basis. Distribution is confined to authorized civilian Governmental agencies, their immediate cooperators, and the Armed Service. It is not now manufactured on a commercial basis and there is no supply available either for private pest control operators or for the public generally.

"The Fish and Wildlife Service intends to place every needed precaution around the use of this material," Dr. Gabrielson said, "at least until more complete information concerning its use becomes available."

Dr. Gabrielson said that the Service was continuing research to learn all hazards involved in the use of "1080" and to develop methods of use which will reduce dangers to a minimum.

"Eventually it is expected that "1080" will be available for civilian use under restrictions or regulations that will guarantee its rational and safe use,"

Dr. Gabrielson said. "For the present, and until experimentation is completed, the use of this potent poison must be surrounded by every possible safeguard."

The effectiveness of "1080" as a rodenticide was discovered as a result of investigations expedited by a grant of funds by the Office of Scientific Research and Development. First studies were made at the Fish and Wildlife Service's research laboratories at Patuxent (Bowie) Md., where the discovery was made. Later investigations, confirming the potency of the substance, were made at the wildlife research laboratory at Denver, Colo. It has been given extensive tests in actual use in the South, as well as in Colorado, California, and South Dakota.

A reason for its particular effectiveness as a rodenticide, other than its toxicity, is that it is easily soluble in water and possesses no unpleasant smell or taste. As a matter of fact, there are indications that rats find its slight odor attractive. In some tests where cups of pure water were placed alongside cups containing water plus "1080", rats appeared to prefer the latter.

Rats are the worst enemies of man. The plague, which is carried by the fleas which infest rats, is estimated to have killed far more humans than all wars put together. In addition, rats spread typhus and other dread diseases. Economically, the score against the rat is also great. Damage done by rats in the United States annually runs to more than \$200,000,000.

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